

a popular revolt ousted Ukraine's Russia-aligned president, Viktor Yanukovich. Vladimir Putin responded immediately, orchestrating a campaign of pro-Russian agitation in eastern Ukraine that resulted several weeks later in the invasion and annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. Obama delegated the crisis to Joe. Ukraine's fate was largely in his hands.

At the same time, Hunter's business ventures were leading him to Ukraine, too. Early in 2014, Archer had entered into talks about joining the board of Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company in serious need of an image makeover. The firm had prospered in recent years because it had won valuable licenses for natural gas extraction from Ukraine's Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. But there was a problem. Burisma's owner, Mykola Zlochevsky, had been Ukraine's minister of ecology and natural resources when the licenses were awarded. The ouster of Yanukovich presented a serious threat to Zlochevsky's business. How would Ukraine's new government handle the awarding of licenses by a Yanukovich minister to his own company?

Archer agreed to take a position on Burisma's board and worked to recruit Hunter to join him. On April 16, Archer and his son, who was working at the time on a White House-related school assignment, visited Joe at the White House. Hunter and Archer have said that Burisma did not come up during the visit.⁵⁷⁹ Two days later, Hunter was appointed to Burisma's board.⁵⁸⁰

He was tasked with helping Burisma clean up its corporate governance and paid roughly \$1 million a year to do it. The easy money allowed Hunter to feed his worsening drug addiction.⁵⁸¹

Taking the job also meant that Joe would be lecturing stakeholders in the country about cleaning up its culture of corruption while his son worked for an oligarch who himself was under suspicion of serious corruption.

George Kent, a career diplomat who served as the State Department's deputy chief of mission in Kiev and as a top anticorruption official during this period, has described Zlochevsky as a "poster child for corrupt behavior."⁵⁸²

Publicly, the White House deflected questions about the propriety of the role. "Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," a Biden spokeswoman said at the time. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."⁵⁸³